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U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk, R-Highland Park, said the 2006 Bush administration budget includes \$122 million in new construction funding for Great Lakes Naval Station, along with full funding to complete the double-tracking of Metra's North Central commuter rail line.

"While it is an austere budget, I am very pleased the Navy will invest heavily in Great Lakes, bringing hundreds of high-paying jobs to our communities," Kirk said.

The funding will be for two new Recruit Training Command barracks, a new drill hall and other infrastructure improvements, part of the continuing 10-year \$700 million upgrade at the nation's lone recruit training facility.

"Building the world's premiere naval facility benefits our men and women in uniform and fosters economic growth and job creation in eastern Lake County," the congressman said.

More than \$20 million has been budgeted to complete the North Central Line project, with Metra planning in December to double the number of trains currently on the tracks through central Lake County.

"Updating our transportation infrastructure is essential to reducing highway gridlock and improving our quality of life," Kirk said. "Increased rail service will ease traffic congestion and have a positive effect on our environment."

Also included in the budget, he said, are provisions accelerating the creation of a new Navy/Veterans Administration hospital in North Chicago.